

REMEMBER WHY

ADVICE FROM A TREE

Stand up tall and proud.

Sink your roots into the earth.

Be content with your natural beauty.

Go out on a limb.

Drink plenty of water.

Remember your roots.

– Ilan Sham



REMEMBERING WHY

There are distinct moments in our lives that pivot us in a new direction. We remember when we first fell in love or got that job offer or discovered cancer.

Our lives are full of intersections
— pathways that lead us, doors
that open and doors that close. The
pathways are sometimes full of light
and other times full of darkness.

Remember that moment in your life when you made the decision to get involved with the Y? Or, perhaps, that moment in your life when the Y found you? Since then, you may have met your spouse, discovered a career or healed from tragedy — all while at the Y.

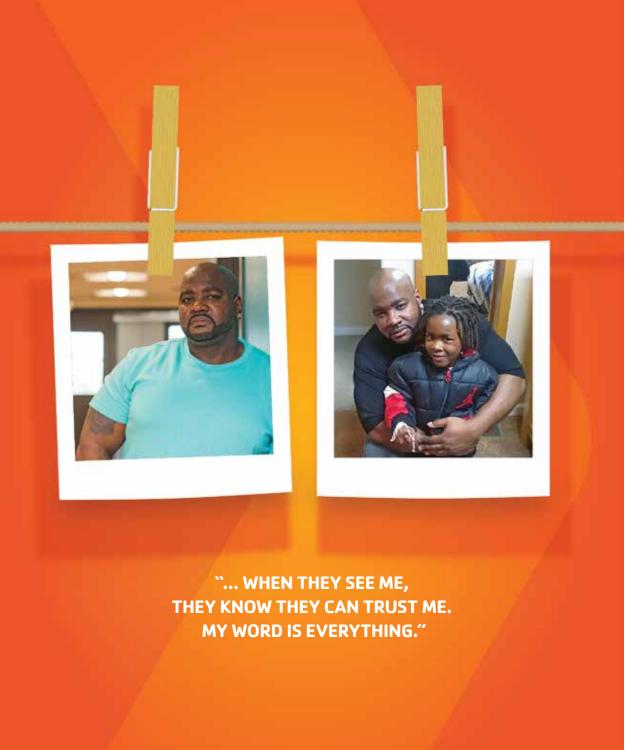
Remember why you started, why you didn't give up and why your Y is so important in your life.

The following pages share the inspirational stories of our members and our staff. Each remembers a moment in their life where the Y, like Shel Silverstein's *Giving Tree*, was there for them, in times of plenty and in want. The Y changed the course of their lives.

For a better you.

For a better community.

For a better us.TM



REMEMBER WHY: **For Family** THE STORY OF **TYSHUN TAYLOR**

It isn't easy to stop a revolving door.

Until you remember why you want it to stop.

Following the early death of his father, Tyshun Taylor, then 17, was deeply grieving. His superhero had kept him and his family well protected and well cared for. While he grew up in public housing, he didn't know he was poor; he didn't know a bad Christmas.

After losing his dad, Tyshun took on many adult responsibilities at home, including helping to manage household bills. That's when he realized that dealing drugs, in addition to working at a neighborhood bakery, would help take care of his family — just the way his dad did. Within the year, Tyshun was in jail.

Although he was a star athlete in football, he never graduated from high school.

In the years that followed, Tyshun lived a slippery slope. Now 43, Tyshun has spent 15 years of his life in jail on drug charges —

having been convicted and released three times. After serving 11 consecutive years behind bars for selling cocaine, he now knows how hard it is to make the transition from incarceration to a productive member of society. However, he also knows that it can be done.

"For me, the hardest part of being locked up was not doing the actual time. The hardest parts were the things that were out of my control. Life was continuing without me. While I was in. I focused on home. I worked out and read books. I had supportive friends and family that would visit, call and write," recalls Tyshun. "While I was in jail, the worst thing in my life happened. My youngest daughter was raped. That destroyed my world."

While in jail, he lost his dear grandmother and a nephew, his daughters distanced themselves, and his longtime girlfriend moved on.

"I got to a point where on the inside, mentally, I became free. I was physically locked up, but my mind was free in that nothing else mattered. I was laser focused on doing my time and going home. I had to be a man and grow up. I had to accept the consequences of my actions. I can't put anyone else in my shoes. Do my time and ao home."

His release from jail is distant from Hollywood's portrayal. He lived in halfway houses and had to overcome the way that others looked at him.

When released, he was almost 39. "I had to shake the stigma of who people thought I was. I felt if I changed the situation up and was a productive citizen, it would be easy when I came home, everybody was going to want to hire me. Frustration set in. Now I'm free in the outside world, but I'm locked up mentally," says Tyshun.

Interview after interview led to disappointment and deeper frustration. "I'd go to a job interview and give it my all. Always professional and articulate — yet it was my background that was killing me. It was stressing me out to the fullest. The thing is, I just kept pushing. I didn't want to do anything else — I knew I couldn't go back. I remembered all I had lost, so I just kept pushing."

Tyshun stopped the revolving door. He got an email about a position that was specifically being offered to ex-offenders. He did a double take.

Tyshun now works as a client advocate through the Erie County Re-Entry Services and Support Alliance (ECRSSA), an initiative of UnifiedErie. ECRSSA provides support and services to individuals who are released from prison and re-entering a law-abiding life. They need housing, counseling, education, employment and support. Just like Tyshun.

That's where the Y comes in. The Y is a partner within the ECRSSA system of faithand community-based organizations that are supporting the work of UnifiedErie. Tyshun is now a contracted employee of the Y and connects with referred ex-offenders and assists them in securing job training, employment, education, medical and/or mental health care, and housing (when the person has a sustainable income).

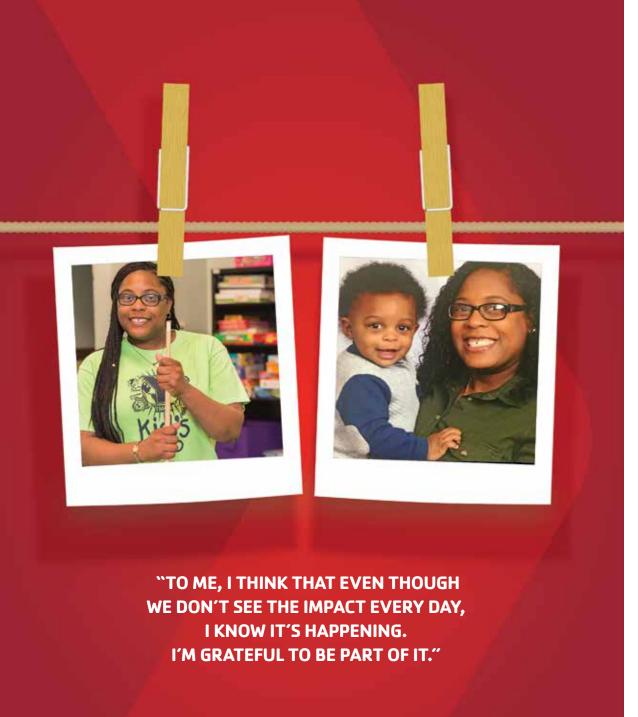
"I didn't have this when I came home. I didn't have a hand. In this job, I'm not just giving someone a hand — I'm giving both of my hands, my feet. I'm going to do it to the best of my ability. I love this job. When they see me, they know they can trust me. My word is everything. They got a warrior."

OUR IMPACT:

1,250 PEOPLE **RE-ENTERING ERIE COUNTY ANNUALLY FOLLOWING INCARCERATION**

TO **PERCENT ARE LIKELY TO RE-OFFEND**

ΓΟ HELP, 00002017 IS YEAR ONE **OF A THREE-YEAR PILOT PROGRAM**



REMEMBER WHY: For Kids

THE STORY OF **SHATREECE JOHNSON**

"I was in sixth grade before I realized I lived in the 'projects.' I just thought we lived in an apartment. I never felt poor," reflects 27-year-old Shatreece Johnson. "My mom worked very hard — third shift most of my life."

Shatreece, her twin sister and her brother grew up in a corner apartment in Pineview, a Housing Authority of the City of Erie neighborhood. Shatreece's mom was a single parent.

Shatreece was like any kid. "With my mom working third shift, she couldn't be there after school to help with homework or ask how my day was. I was able to get away with a lot more. She did the best she could." says Shatreece.

One of the supports provided to the residents of the neighborhood is a yearround educational and recreational program for kids — YMCA Kids Club. The Club gives kids a safe place to go, where they connect

with caring adults and have experiences they otherwise may not.

"Growing up, I spent every day at the YMCA Kids Club from the time I was 6 years old. I would come right after school. The Kids Club was our fun — it is where I found connection to adults. Coming to the Club changed me. It put rules and standards where there were none in my life.

"My role model was Cherie — she was in charge of the Club. I wanted to be just like her," said Shatreece. "She believed in me. My sister and I were the first ones in our family to complete college. I knew I wanted to run a program to keep kids off the street. When it came time to complete my internship, I came back to the YMCA Kids Club to continue learning from Cherie. I remembered why the Club was so important to me growing up. I wanted to help kids the way that I was helped at the Club. I graduated from Slippery Rock University with a degree in social work, just like Cherie!"

Shatreece credits her mom with the motivation to excel in school. "If I did nothing else, I was going to succeed in school. It was always my number one priority." Among her academic accolades was her induction into the Who's Who Among American High School Students and the National Honor Society.

"If it weren't for the YMCA Kids Club, I don't

even know where I'd be. The YMCA taught me to dream. It taught me to value myself and my community. The YMCA gave me the ability to do the things I do today."

Shatreece has come full circle and serves as the recreation director of the YMCA Kids Club in Pineview and at the John Horan Garden Apartments.

"We give the kids that come through the door permission to forget the problems they have at home. We've had kids who have had a parent killed and they come to the Club the very next day. We've had kids who have had parents and family members go to jail. We've had kids who don't have anything to eat at home — that just breaks my heart," says Shatreece. "We have kids who struggle to read at 10 years old. Outside of everything else they have going on in the world, we offer them a sanctuary. The Club is somewhere they can let go of everything they have going on at home and just be a kid.

"I try my best to provide the kids with an example the way that Cherie did for me. I do my best in setting the standards for them. I don't fault the parents for not being able to do it. The kids call me the 'regulator' — I try to give them the discipline that they don't get all the time.

"I want them to do better. I try to teach them better, so then they know better and then they can do better. It's not always with every kid, but if I can change one kid's life

the way my life's been changed, then I am okav with that.

"To me, I think that even though we don't see the impact every day, I know it's happening. I'm grateful to be part of it. When they argue with me, I remind them that I used to be them. The kids and the parents respect me more because I have been there. It's a humbling experience for me. We are our own little family and we stick close. It makes me feel good at night that I have put my all into this program and every kid that comes here, we are improving their lives for the better."

OUR IMPACT:

VOLUNTEERS DONATED **HOURS** TO THE YOUTH





YMCA KIDS CLUBS SERVE 300 MEMBERS **BETWEEN 6-18 YEARS OLD EACH MONTH**



THEY CARRY THAT COMPASSION INTO THEIR PERSONAL LIVES."

REMEMBER WHY: **For Community** THE STORY OF **IROQUOIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

You never know who you're going to meet.

Last summer, Iroquois Elementary School teacher Jennifer Bayhurst attended the Pennsylvania Department of Education Governor's Institute.

In one particular session, Jennifer crossed paths with YMCA Vice President for Youth Development Jill Simmons. The conversation lead to an intersection of ideas. The teachers at Iroquois Elementary School had been looking for just the right project to support their students and the community outside of school.

For years, the Y has been serving up free food as part of the Meals for Kids program funded by the Walmart Foundation. Today, Iroquois Elementary School teachers and administrators volunteer two days per week serving meals to kids.

"Many of our students start and end their day here at the Y. It's important for them to have the consistency of knowing that we care about them — even when they are not in school. They get so excited when they see us," says Jennifer.

Fellow teacher Stacy Olmstead agrees. "The Y is also not a school structure. We get to be silly with them and form a deeper relationship. I really like that it is also family-style seating. We get to talk and laugh with them. It's fun for them to see us in that way, too."

And, it's not just the children's bellies that are filling up. It's their spirits too. "The children see us in a different element. We're giving them more of ourselves beyond the classroom. They see us caring for the community, showing compassion for others," says Sue Johnson.

They wear their shirts, donated by the Society of Holy Trinity, with pride — Building Braves, Building Community. Principal Brian Bronson shares this sentiment. "It makes me extremely proud, knowing that not only do our teachers care about the kids during the school day, they carry that compassion into their personal lives." Principal Bronson had an aha moment when serving one evening. "I was surprised to realize how much they like vegetables. One little girl asked for three servings!"

"For us as teachers, it's important to remember that this dinner program allows a sense of community where the children know they are cared for and they are able to see our familiar faces. Many of our families work hours that do not allow them to sit down and have dinner as a family." says Jennifer.

#onefamily #bestelementaryschoolontheplanet

OUR IMPACT:

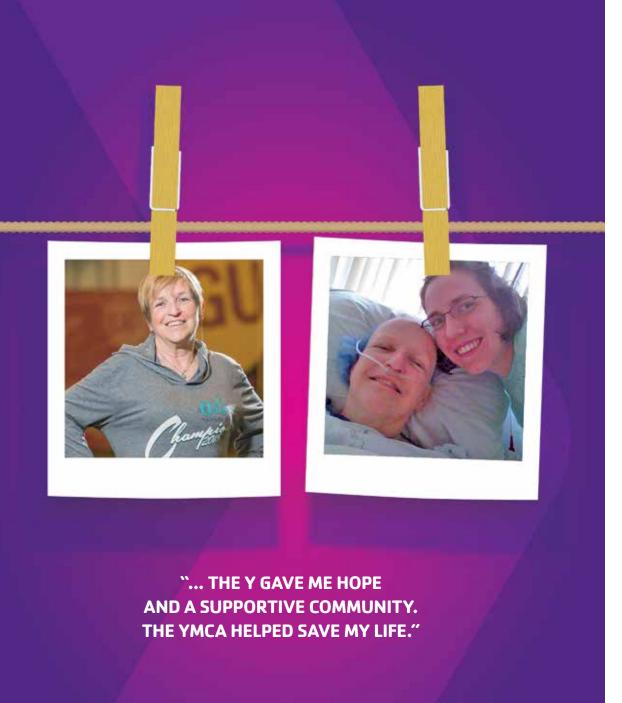


8,332 **GALLONS** HEALTHY, LOW-FAT **SUGARY DRINKS**

FOOD + FUN BUS SERVED 25,000 MEALS TO KIDS IN UNDERSERVED NEIGHBORHOODS



417.000 **MEALS** AND SNACKS PROVIDED AS **HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES FOR CHILDREN**



REMEMBER WHY: **For Faith** THE STORY OF **CATHERINE DATTE**

Catherine was turning 50 and her life was not what she had imagined.

This occasion called for a symbolic celebration — a fresh start.

The usual bucket list of activities — hot air balloon riding, white water rafting — didn't fit the bill.

Skydiving was next on the list.

"I remember thinking how scary it was and how empowering," reflects Catherine. "What better way to mark this new time in my life than to take a leap of faith and jump out of an airplane." That was in 2005. She now has over 1,070 jumps and teaches others how to sky dive.

The sky-diving lesson became a mantra for Catherine. "I teach other people how to jump so that I can remember why I learned in the first place. When I face something scary, I remind myself that I jump out of

airplanes for fun. We all face moments in our life when we don't know what's next. In my life, I've realized that I need to challenge myself, my fears. And, I want to be a stronger person. For me, sky diving became the metaphor for this life lesson."

Throughout the next 10 years, Catherine's life was peppered with leaps of faith, including relocation to Erie as a single woman and a new career at Gannon University.

A breast cancer diagnosis at 60 was Catherine's next leap of faith. Chemo every two weeks and breast reconstruction — all while working full time at Gannon.

It was during this journey that Catherine received an invitation to be part of Gannon's employee team participating in the Highmark QUAD Games, a series of four fitness events coordinated by the Y.

Catherine realized how important physical and spiritual wellness was to her full recovery. While in the midst of chemo, she decided to sign up and begin training for the first event — a 100-yard swim.

"Here I am, the bald lady. I put my bathing suit on and began practicing here at Gannon. One of the challenges with chemo is that on the seventh day you pretty much have no energy. I was determined to defy that. I was going to find energy. I kept going to the pool making sure that I could swim

the required four lengths. Then, I had my last chemo treatment just days before the OUAD swim."

She completed her first length of the pool and was overcome with exhaustion; her mind filling with fear and doubt.

A tearful Catherine recalls, "I remember thinking. I have to do three more lengths. I kept telling myself that it was okay. The QUAD is not about winning — just participating. I don't have to win. For me, the win was that I was there. I realized I was the last person in the water. I finished all four lengths of the pool with my team on the deck supporting me.

"I remember the day that I jumped out of an airplane and I needed faith and trust. I had to believe that it was my faith and trust that were going to get me through this; I am strong. People care and people help. And the QUAD Games are about being there — not about winning. I was winning, I just didn't know it."

Catherine's recovery from cancer paralleled all four QUAD events.

"The QUAD Games just showed up at the right time for me. What better way to hang on to your strength than to train for an event? I had all of the folks from Gannon behind me, beside me and in front of me — supporting me. I realized in my year of treatment and healing and recovery, the

OUAD Games was there and the Y was there. The Y gave me hope and a supportive community. The YMCA helped save my life."

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OUR IMPACT:

THE HIGHMARK **OUAD GAMES**



ONLY **FOUR PEOPLE COMPLETED EVERY QUAD EVENT SINCE 1982:** JANINE DALY **BILL FRANKENBERG. RON GRAFF AND**

RICK RODLAND

84 YEARS OLD OLDEST OUAD PARTICIPANT 6 YEARS OLD YOUNGEST **OUAD PARTICIPANT**

OVER 600 OUAD RIDERS RAISED MORE THAN \$13,000 FOR THE 1985 ALBION TORNADO RELIEF

2016 EMPLOYEE & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Sean Amicucci, Eastside Family Zarife Balti. Glenwood Park Erin Hinkson. YMCA Early Learnina & School-Aae Enrichment Center at Wattsburg Elementary Center Julie Lakota, *County* Ron Lance. Camp Sherwin Brenda Rivera, Downtown

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Stephanie Alward/Carrie Grav. Downtown John Bellucci/John's Wildwood Pizza. County John Maloney/Tom Burkett, Erie County Adult Probation. Camp Sherwin Randy Martin, Eastside Family Rebecca Nestor. *Glenwood Park* Rebich Investments, Association Office

5 YEARS OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE

Chrishawnda Allen Stephanie Alward Kathrvn Barbour Michelle Bielanin Pam Caswell Stacey Christensen Eric Coleman Dana Copeland II Yvette Dash

Gwendolyn Donohue Angela Ewing Lindsey Fogle Douglas Forne Kelly Gibson Erin Hinkson Carrie Keyes Chelsev Kimple Justice Makusi Stephanie Milhisler Ashlev Ponsoll Amber Prindle

Joan Rea

Elizabeth Richards

Richard Schroeder

Vanessa Williams

Lisa Snidarich

Jeffrev Arduini

Dawn Banister

Raymond Sanner, Jr.

10 YEARS OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE

Carrie Breski Darvl Dambaugh Theresa Forgione Elisabeth Hess Nicole Pawlak Chelsie Rudzinski Laura Olon Tina O'Sullivan Jillian Salamon Jeanette Snippert

15 YEARS OF **EMPLOYEE SERVICE**

Stacy Dambaugh Emily Irwin Denise Izbicki Monica Olesnanik Ellen Otto

20 YEARS OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE

Jeannine Bello Christine Fracassi Grace Gausman Missy Raun Janet Sanchez Kimberly Stachewicz

YMCA OF GREATER ERIE **METROPOLITAN BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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YMCA HERITAGE CLUB MEMBERS

The following individuals have made a lasting investment in our community through their commitment to the YMCA Endowment Fund Below is a partial list of members as some prefer to remain anonymous.

Peter and Mary Bates Judge Warren Bentz* Paul Bowers* Carl Cannavino Louis Close* Lyman and Marilyn Cohen Andrew Connor, Esq. Charles* and Pam Dailev John Dauber Joe and Lisa Dobrich Gary and Emy Dougan Tom* and Carol Dovle John and Susan Dunn Harold Durst* Jeffrey and Emily Evans Mariorie Ferguson Michael and Sandy Fetzner, Esq.

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Rich and Suzanne Weber Cyrus and Susan Wellman Carl and Jessica Wolfrom Walt and Martha Wydro Douglas Ziegler *Denotes Deceased YMCA CHAIR'S **ROUNDTABLE** Recognizes donors for contributing \$1000 or more to the Y's annual community support campaign We Build People or special events. projects and programs during calendar Sean and Kim Beers Ron and Cindy Bielanin **BNY Mellon** Blake Family Foundation **Brooks Landscape** Richard Chapman Coca-Cola/Powerade Custom Imprint & Design Carolyn Dale Jack Daneri Gary and Emy Dougan Electrical & Mechanical Systems, Inc. Elks Lodge #67 Erie Arts & Culture **Erie Community Foundation ETG Communications** Erie County Convention Center Erie Insurance Group Erie Seawolves Jeff and Emily Evans

Everett and Susan Walker

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MJ Surgala Trust Tony and Carol Gilmore GE Foundation Matching Gifts Attv. M. Fletcher & Elsie O. Gornall Fund **Guarino Enterprises** Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Howard Family Charitable Trust Terry and Judy Jones Sheldon Kaercher Estate John and Rebecca Kathman Thomas Keating Trust Tom and Kim Kennedy Kern Family Foundation Paul and Gretchen Lorei LifeFitness Marquette Savings Bank Matrix Fitness Margaret Matthews Dale and Lynn McBrier

McCain Family Foundation

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PNC Bank

PNC Foundation

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Menale Foundation

Northwest Savings Bank

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Petersen Foundation

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Saint Vincent Sports Medicine

Merwin Foundation

McCarty Printing/Don Seiber

McGarvey Family Foundation

Roger Taft Gerard T. Uht. Sr. Family Fund United Way of Erie County **UPMC** Hamot UPMC Health Plan **USI Midwest** UTZ Snacks Gerry and Amy Vandemerwe Walmart Walmart Foundation Weamans Louise K. Wells Fund Wesleyville American Legion Dennis Wilkins YMCA of the USA Y-Mens Club

The YMCA makes every effort to ensure that each contributor's name is listed properly. If your name is omitted, listed incorrectly or misspelled, we offer our sincere apologies and ask you to advise us of corrections by calling Tammy Roche at (814) 452-1432.

Dr. Jim and Laura Johannes Terry and Judy Jones Sheldon Kaercher* Thomas and Kimberly Kennedy Bob* and Betty* Kilgore Frank Knauer* Bill* and Verle Lander year 2016. Kevin Larson Craig and Kathy Latimer Dick and Sharon Levick BKD, LLC Mark and Sue Lucas Bob and Gayle Magee David* and Margaret Matthews Rav* and Ginny McGarvey Richard Merwin Tom and Marie Myers, Esq. Gordon and Barbara Osborn Gary and Charlene Popson Elizabeth Reslink* Don* and Betty* Robins Matthew and Tammy Roche Allan and Pat Schell James and Frances Schlabach Ken Slanev Albert Straus Robert Taft* Bill and Cathy Taylor, Jr. Arloween Todd* Gerard Uht. Sr. Dr. William* and Janice Underhill Virginia Flowers Gerry and Amy Vandemerwe Giant Eagle

John Kathman 2016 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



REVENUES

KLVLNULJ				
Membership	 	. \$5.	886.	85
Childcare				
Program				
United Way				
Community Sup				
Other				

EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits\$10,270,722
Other Operating Expenses\$7,569,062
TOTAL \$17,839,784

MEMBERSHIP	2015	2016
(as of Dec. 31, 2016)		
Membership Units	8,406	8,537
TOTAL MEMBERS	25,029	26,698

2016 HIGHLIGHTS





HOURŠ INVESTED

\$223,000 **ESTIMATED WORK VALUE**

\$1,008,193 CHILDREN, TEENS, FAMILIES, AND



Å 3,041 **FAMILY BONDS**





HEALTHY MEALS AND SNACKS TO CHILDREN



EMPOWERED TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL THROUGH MENT®RSHIP, **ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT, CONFLICT RESOLUTION**



OUR MISSION

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

OUR FOCUS

Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility

OUR CAUSE

To strengthen community



YMCA OF GREATER ERIE 31 W. 10th Street Erie, PA 16501 www.ymcaerie.org